

DIAMOND *express lane*



I-80 Diamond Express Lanes Goes To Work March 7

The New Jersey Department of Transportation will open the I-80 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in Morris County in March by completing a widening project ahead of schedule, Acting Transportation Commissioner Kathy A. Stanwick has announced.

"We are just as anxious as commuters to finish the I-80 widening work so the Diamond Express Lanes can open," Stanwick said. "The remaining roadway, bridge and signing work will be sufficiently completed by March 7 to open the new lanes early."

Called the Diamond Express Lanes, the HOV lanes will extend 10.5 miles from Route 15 in Rockaway Township through the I-287 interchange in Parsippany-Troy Hills. The lanes

were designated for HOVs in August 1992 by former Commissioner Tom Downs, prompted in large part by federal Clean Air Act mandates.

The far left lane will be reserved for buses, vans and cars with two or more people on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. eastbound and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. westbound. The lanes will be open to all traffic at all other times.

Prior to the March 7 opening, construction crews will place additional signs designating the HOV lanes.

Open For Business

"The support of the region's corporate community underscores the value of the Diamond Express Lanes in helping

businesses address the Employer Trip Reduction (ETR) mandates of the Clean Air Act," Stanwick said. "Employers of 100 or more people have less than a year to develop ETR plans to cut solo commuting to their work places by 25 percent.

"As Clean Air Act deadlines draw nearer, investments such as the HOV lanes are critical to improving air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the road," Stanwick said. "The Express Lanes are among the incentives being created to move more people in fewer vehicles." The HOV lanes also reduce commute time by moving traffic more swiftly.

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Assembly Transportation Committee
Chairman Alex DeCroce, R-Morris-Passaic-
Essex, addresses 80/80 Committee

Regional Employers Support HOV Lanes

The March 7 opening of the I-80 Diamond Express Lanes will help regional employers of 100 or more people meet federal Employer Trip Reduction mandates more easily and more quickly, according to a new business group supporting the lanes' successful implementation.

Representatives from more than 45 Morris and Essex county businesses attending the first meeting of the 80 Employers for I-80 Committee at Jersey Central Power & Light, Morristown, were briefed by regional and state transportation officials on the operation and benefits of the Express Lanes.

"Encouraging employees to take advantage of the HOV lanes and build worksite ridesharing programs around their use will put regional businesses on the cutting edge of ETR compliance," said William Deane of Storch Engineers, Fairfield, chairman of the 80/80 group.

The 80/80 Committee invites all regional businesses impacted by the ETR mandate to attend committee meetings. For more information, call Morris County Rides (201) 267-7600.

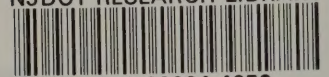
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Emergency Service Patrols Launched on I-80

Did you know that each minute a lane is blocked by a disabled vehicle results in four minutes of traffic delays?

To reduce delays, improve traffic flow and better serve its motoring customers, the New Jersey Department of Transportation has announced the start of Emergency Service Patrols along the Diamond Express Lane corridor and along major highways in South Jersey.

Specially marked NJDOT vehicles will aid disabled motorists along I-80 between Route 15 and I-287 in Morris County between 4:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. on weekdays.

The van and truck operators will change flat tires, add gas and perform minor repairs. Towing service and additional assistance can be requested from the scene through NJDOT radio and cellular phone systems. Information about delays will be reported to NJDOT's traffic operations center and then relayed to radio stations to alert motorists.

"This pilot program will benefit not only stranded motorists, but all drivers on I-80," said Acting Transportation Commissioner Kathy A. Stanwick.

"Eliminating traffic congestion is sometimes as simple as getting a disabled vehicle off the road. Other states have had success with similar patrols. We're confident New Jersey motorists, and Diamond Express Lane commuters, will see positive results from this program."

The pilot program, financed through \$1.35 million in federal funds, will operate for a two-year period. An evaluation of the program will follow.

The vans and trucks, painted white with orange letters stating "Emergency Service Patrol" are equipped with first aid kits, jacks, traffic cones, fire extinguishers, tools and spare parts. The NJDOT employees driving these vehicles will be uniformed and have official identification. The eight NJDOT maintenance employees operating the patrols have received special training.

While acknowledging skepticism among some commuters about HOV lanes, Stanwick said traffic projections show that, within a decade, four general traffic lanes on I-80 would be as congested as three lanes are now.

A New Direction

"New Jersey can no longer afford to continue the cycle of building more lanes to carry more traffic," she said. "Over time, we are confident the HOV lanes will encourage commuters to share a ride to lower the cost, time and stress of getting to work."

HOV lanes are expanding nationwide in suburban settings like Morris County, such as in California, Virginia and Connecticut. There are 45 HOV facilities operating on 360 miles of highway across the country. This mileage is expected to double soon. New Jersey's Lincoln Tunnel exclusive bus lane is one of the nation's most successful HOV lanes. The lane carries 725 buses per hour, removing 34,000 vehicles an hour from the tunnel during rush hour.

NJDOT is expanding and building new park and ride lots throughout the I-80 corridor and NJ TRANSIT will begin offering van service in April from Sparta and the Hackettstown area to Parsippany-Troy Hills employment sites.

Free To Employers

Employers can take advantage of Diamond Express Lane informational materials, corporate table top exhibits and on-site promotions to educate employees on the benefits of the HOV lanes. Call Morris County Rides at 201-267-7600.



**For information on carpools,
vanpools and park & ride locations:**

Call 1-800-245-POOL

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